IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

Appellant: Gregory J. Petras et. al.

Serial No.:   10/624,345

Technology Center: 2100

Art Unit: 2166

Filed: July 22, 2003

Title: "System for Creating and Maintaining a
                      Database of Information Utilizing User Opinions"

Examiner: Lin, Shew Fen

Docket No.:   WC01520-2

AMENDED APPEAL BRIEF

I.   INTRODUCTION

This Appeal is from an Office Action mailed on August 27, 2007, rejecting Claims 35, 36, and 43-85 of the current application. Applicant commenced this Appeal by Notice of Appeal filed December 27, 2007, and submission of this Appeal Brief filed January 27, 2008. This Amended Appeal Brief is being submitted in furtherance of the Appeal to cure some alleged defects as requested by the Examiner.

II.   REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

Involve Technology, Inc.
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Phoenix, Arizona 85028

III.   RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

None.

IV.   STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-85 are pending in the application, wherein Claims 1-34 and 37-42 have been withdrawn from consideration, and Claims 35, 36, and 43-85 are rejected and subject to the present appeal. The claims on appeal are set forth in the attached Appendix. Claims 35, 43, and 64 are independent claims. Claim 36 depends directly from Claim 35, Claims 44-63 depend directly or indirectly from Claim 43, and Claims 65-85 depend directly or indirectly from Claim 85.

V. STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

No amendments subsequent to the final action have been filed.

VI. SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

This invention relates to a system for automatically creating and maintaining a database of information utilizing user opinions about subjects, particularly exceptional experiences. The invention assists /motivates a population of users interested in information about certain categories of subjects to automatically maintain database content and to improve the usefulness and quality of database information without any substantial management by the website owner-manager. User opinions are primarily in the form of both comments and ratings about which natural-language terms best describe a particular subject, enabling user searches of the subject database to be by way of preferred such descriptive natural-language terms, which terms are further preferred to be evaluative and approving.

<u>Summary of Independent Claim 35</u>

As recited in independent Claim 35, one aspect of the invention involves "an Internet website client-server computer system" (such as the preferred embodiment website computer system shown in FIGs. 1A-1C) that can be used to determine by e-mail survey a level of subject approval for each one of a population of survey participants by capturing each such participant's opinions about the degree of relevance of each of a respective set of natural language terms to each of a respective set of subjects. The Internet website client-server computer system comprises

> a) a client interface system arranged so that a survey taker may indicate at least
>> i) a defined question for the survey,
>> ii) a such set of subjects to be evaluated,

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      iii)   a such set of natural-language terms to be rated as to relevancy to each

               subject,

      iv)   a participant audience, and

      v)   a time-frame for response;

b)   a server computer processor system connected with said client interface system;
and

c)   a server computer software system, operational with said server computer
processor system, arranged to provide survey processing comprising

      i)   compiling a survey file and survey document in accordance with survey

               taker input,

      ii)   communicating such survey document to such participant audience, and

      iii)   receiving and tabulating responses.

most clearly described on page 57, lines 19-34, and page 58, lines 1-20, of the specification and

shown in operation in the flow chart of FIG. 19 (reproduced below).

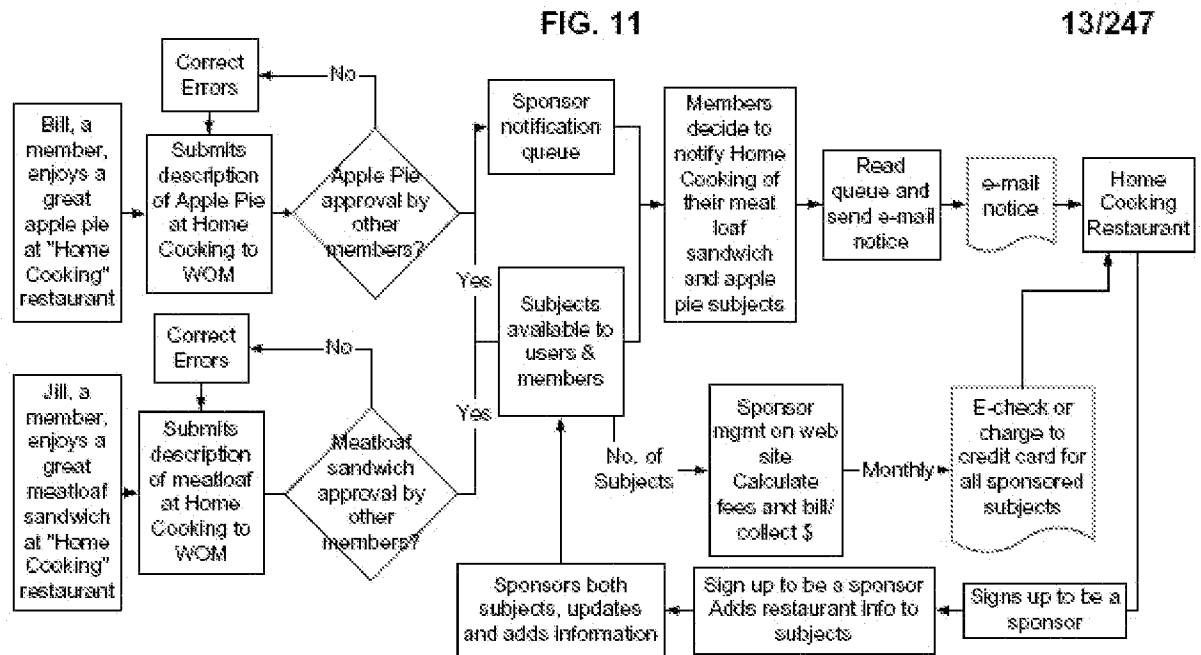FIG. 19   21/247
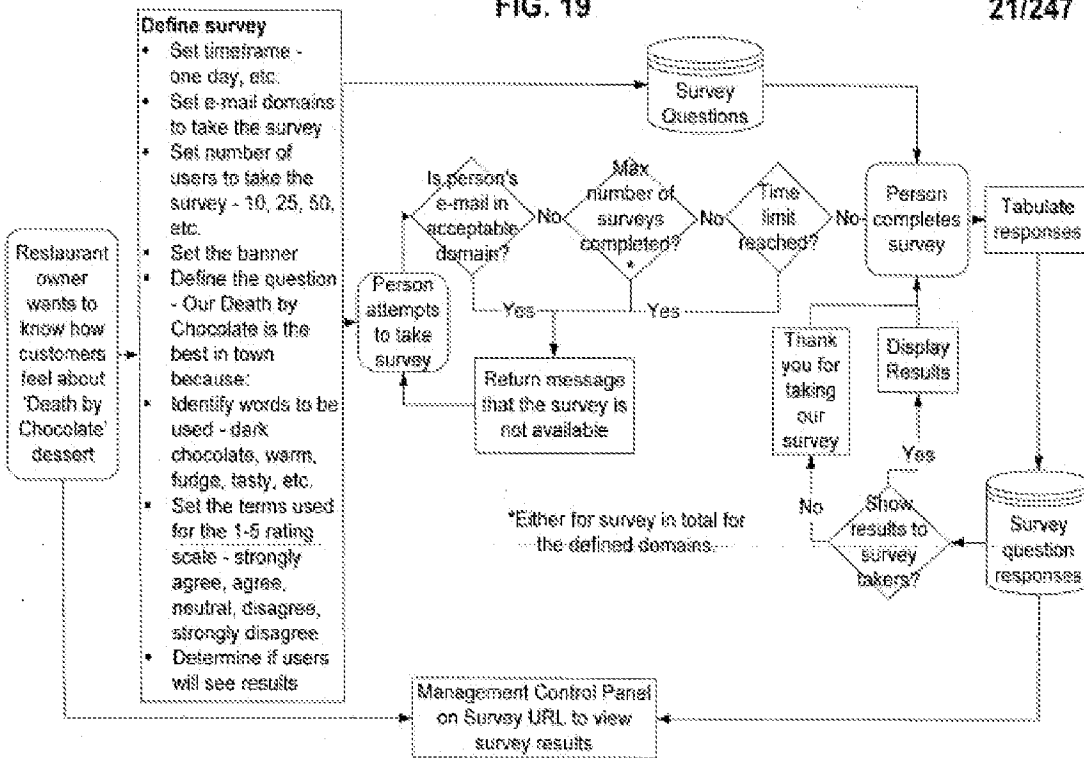
Summary of Independent Claim 43

As recited in independent Claim 43, another aspect of the invention involves an Internet client-server system (such as the preferred embodiment website computer system shown in FIGs. 1A-1C) for assisting at least one group of users having at least one common goal to capture and search, in a single database, offered knowledge, relevant to such at least one common goal, of a plurality of such users for the benefit of at least one of such users, comprising

a)   individually capturing for such database at least one experience of at least some of such plurality;

b)   storing in such database such experience;

most clearly described on page 51, lines 3-9, of the specification and shown in operation in the

flow chart of FIG. 11 (reproduced below)

FIG. 11

and

    c)   user-searching, using at least one natural-language word, to select at least one

             desired kind of stored experience;

    d)   performing such user-searching; and

    e)   presenting search results.

most clearly described on page 56, lines 1-34, and page 57, lines 1-18, of the specification and

shown in operation in the flow chart of FIG. 17 (reproduced below).

FIG. 17   19/247
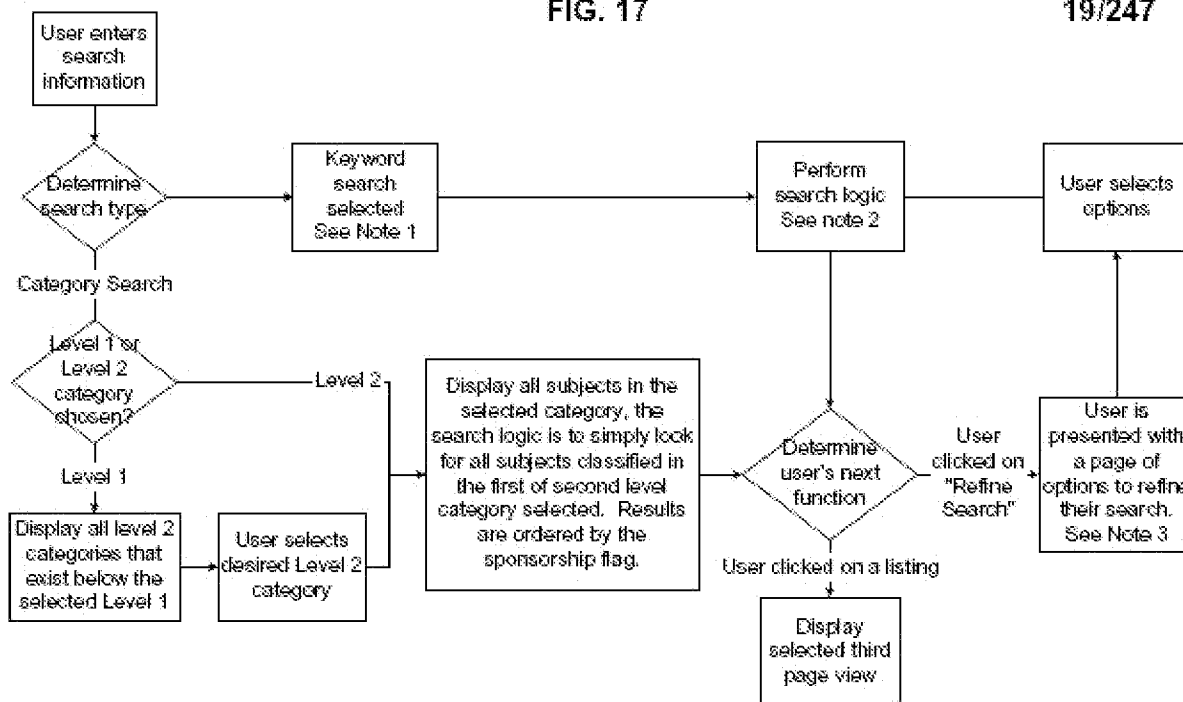
Summary of Independent Claim 64

As recited in independent Claim 64, another aspect of the invention involves an Internet

client-server system (such as the preferred embodiment website computer system shown in FIGs.

1A-1C) for assisting a group of users with at least one common goal to capture and search, in a

single database, offered knowledge, relevant to such at least one common goal, of a plurality of

such users for the benefit of at least one of such users, comprising:

a)   interface means for individually capturing for such database at least one
      experience of at least some of such plurality;

b)   database means for storing such experiences;

c)   interface means for user-searching, using at least one natural-language word, to
      select at least one desired kind of stored experience;

d)   processor means for performing such user-searching; and

e)   interface means for presenting search results.

most clearly described in the paragraphs starting on page 51, line 3 of the specification and shown in Fig. 11 (reproduced above) and described in the paragraphs starting on page 56, line 1 of the specification and shown in operation in the flow chart of Fig. 17 (reproduced above).

VII. GROUNDS OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

The following claim rejections were asserted in the Rejection:

(A) Claims 45, 47.49, 52, 54-56, 58, 60, 61, 63, 66, 68, 70, 72-74, 76, 78, 79, 81, and 83 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

(B) Claims 35 and 36 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,477,504 to Hamlin et al. (hereinafter "Hamlin").

(C) Claims 43-45, 48, 49, 52, 56, and 57 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,029,192 to Hill et al. (hereinafter "Hill").

(D) Claims 46, 47, 50, 51, 53-55, 58, and 59 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hill in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,405,175 to Ng.

(E) Claims 60-62 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hill in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,749,079 to Yong et al. (hereinafter "Yong").

(F) Claim 63 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hill in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,948,054 to Nielsen.

(G) Claims 64-85 "have the same subject matter as of claims above" and stand rejected "for the same reasons as discussed above".

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The issues before the Board are as follows:

35 U.S.C. §112

ISSUE 1: Under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, are Claims 45, 47.49, 52, 54-56, 58, 60, 61, 63, 66, 68, 70, 72-74, 76, 78, 79, 81, and 83 indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention?

35 U.S.C. §102

ISSUE 2: Under 35 USC §102(e), does Hamlin's "Method and Apparatus for Automating the Conduct of Surveys Over a Network System" anticipate the subject matter of Claims 35 and 36?

ISSUE 3: Under 35 USC §102(e), does Hill's "System and Method for Locating Resources on a Network Using Resource Evaluations Derived From Electronic Messages" anticipate the subject matter of Claims 43-45, 48, 49, 52, 56, and 57?

35 U.S.C. §103

ISSUE 4: Under 35 USC §103(a), are Claims 46, 47, 50, 51, 53-55, 58, and 59 unpatentable over Hill in view of Ng?

ISSUE 5: Under 35 USC §103(a), are Claims 60-62 unpatentable over Hill in view of Yong?

ISSUE 6: Under 35 USC §103(a), is Claim 63 unpatentable over Hill in view of Nielson?

Other Rationale

ISSUE 7: Are Claims 64-85 unpatentable "for the same reasons as discussed above"?

VIII. ARGUMENT

Appellant's Claims Meet the Requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, Second Paragraph

ISSUE 1: Under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, are Claims 45, 47.49, 52, 54-56, 58, 60, 61, 63, 66, 68, 70, 72-74, 76, 78, 79, 81, and 83 indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention?

<u>Claims 45 and 66</u>

In rejecting Claims 45 and 66, the Examiner states that the recitation of the word "substantially" in these claims renders them indefinite. The Examiner asserts that the word "substantially" "is not defined by the claim[s], the specification does not provide a standard for ascertaining the requisite degree, and one of ordinary skill in the art would not be reasonably appraised of the scope of the invention." However, it is respectfully submitted that the terms "substantially automatic website management system" (recited in Claim 45) and "substantially-automatic website managing" (recited in Claim 66) are definite.

Appellant's specification, starting at page 98, line 32, explains that a "key feature" of an embodiment of the invention is that "the Website essentially does not require Management by a Developer/Operator/Site Manager and that the software of the Website performs management functions substantially automatically." It is clear from the specification that the terms "substantially automatic website management system" and "substantially-automatic website managing" refer to a website that does not require ongoing management. In this case, "substantially automatic" management means that the software itself performs all (or nearly all) management functions without direct Developer/Operator/Site Manager involvement.

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It is respectfully submitted that the recitations of the word "substantially" are definite and precise. Contrary to the Examiner's assertion, one of ordinary skill in the art would be reasonably apprised of the scope of the invention.[1]

Claims 52 and 70

Additionally, the Examiner has rejected Claims 52 and 70 on the ground that the recitations of the term "if any" in these claims renders them indefinite. The Examiner states that the term "if any" renders the claims indefinite because "it is unclear what happens when the 'if' statement is not true, making the scope of the claim unascertainable."

Claims 52 and 70 recite steps that are to be done conditionally. For example, Claim 52 recites the feature of "selecting, if any, such at least one kind of stored experience associated with chosen such at least one natural language word". Accordingly, this step would only be done if there are any stored experiences associated with chosen such at least one natural language word. It is respectfully submitted that the scope of a claim is not indefinite merely because a condition is set forth for performing it. Furthermore, it is respectfully submitted that a patentee is not required to set forth alternate steps to perform when a condition is not met.

Reversal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, is respectfully sought.[2]

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[1]Additionally, it is respectfully noted that the word "substantially" has a long and well established usage in patent claim writing. It is understood by patent practitioners and the courts that "substantially" means "all or nearly all". See, for example, *Andrew Corp. v. Gabriel Electronics*, 847 F.2d 819, 6 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1988).

[2]The Examiner also rejected Claims 47, 49, 54-56, 58, 60, 61, 63, 68, 72-74, 76, 78, 79, 81, and 83, on the ground that these claims lack antecedent basis. Should the present appeal be successful, the Appellant intends to file an amendment to the claims to correct the antecedent basis problems noted by the Examiner. Appellant requests that the Board remand the case to the Examiner with instructions to enter any such amendment in order to put the case into condition for allowance.

* * *

ISSUE 2: Under 35 USC §102(e), does Hamlin's "Method and Apparatus

For Automating the Conduct of Surveys over a Network System" anticipate the subject matter of

Claims 35 and 36?

Hamlin discloses a method and apparatus for automating surveys over a network system.

An interface is used by a client to define a survey. However, Hamlin involves automating

production of conventional surveys, not the type of surveys disclosed and claimed by the

Appellant. Hamlin's surveys ask a series of questions related to a topic. But Hamlin fails to

disclose any survey involving "a such set of subjects to be evaluated" and "a such set of natural-

language terms to be rated as to relevancy to each survey", as recited in Claim 35.

To facilitate understanding of Appellant's invention, the specification provides several

examples. In one such example[3], the "subject" of the survey is an "exceptional experience" such

as "a succulent steak, a cozy campsite, neighborhood sports bar". The user then chooses a list of

pre-selected descriptive words (e.g., "tasty, romantic, friendly service") associated with the

subject. The user then rates the importance of each of these words giving each of them a

numerical value (e.g., 5 for "extremely", "4" for "very", etc.). This novel type of survey is not

disclosed, taught or suggested by the Hamlin reference.

The courts have explained: "The identical invention must be shown in as complete detail

as is contained in the ... claim." *Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co.*, 868 F.2d 1226, 1236, 9

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[3] See, Appellant's specification, starting at page 59, line 9; and Figure 20.

USPQ2d 1913, 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989); and "A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference." *Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053(Fed. Cir. 1987). Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that a case of anticipation under 35 USC §102(e) has not been established since the Hamlin reference does not disclose each and every element of Claims 35.

Furthermore, Hamlin fails to disclose the subject matter of Claim 36 which calls for displaying survey results at a publicized URL. In rejecting this claim, the Examiner refers to Hamlin, at column 10, lines 27-29, for this feature, but this portion of the cited text merely refers certain embodiments of the invention in which unspecified "survey data" is "posted on a site that is connected to the network system that is accessible by the client." It is respectfully submitted that "displaying survey results at a publicized URL" is substantially different from posting "survey data" on a "site" that is connected to a network system that is accessible by a client.

Because the Hamlin reference fails to disclose the subject matter of Claims 35 and 36, this reference would not have anticipated the subject matter of Claims 35 and 36.

Reversal of the rejection of Claims 35 and 36 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) is respectfully sought

* * *

ISSUE 3: Under 35 USC §102(e), does Hill's "System and Method for Locating Resources on a Network Using Resource Evaluations Derived From Electronic Messages" anticipate the subject matter of Claims 43-45, 48, 49, 52, 56, and 57?

Appellant has invented a novel system for assisting at least one group of users having at least one common goal to capture and search, in a single database, offered knowledge, relevant

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to such at least one common goal, of a plurality of such users for the benefit of at least one of such users. The system comprises a) individually capturing for such database at least one experience of at least some of such plurality; b) storing in such database such experience; c) user-searching, using at least one natural-language word, to select at least one desired kind of stored experience; d) performing such user-searching; and e) presenting search results.

In contrast, Hill discloses a system and method for locating resources on a network using resource evaluations derived from electronic messages. For instance, Hill can read a message from a "Usenet" discussion and find a URL associated with a topic of the discussion in the body of the message. Once the URL is found, the system stores the URL in a database. When information regarding the topic is entered into a search engine, URL's associated with the entered search string are displayed. However, Hill does not disclose storing in any database <u>user experiences</u> or user-searching, using at least one natural-language word, to select at least one desired kind of stored <u>experience</u>.

In rejecting Claim 43, the Examiner refers to Fig. 3, reference no. 33, of Hill, for the feature of "storing in such database such experience" but this figure merely shows a flow chart illustrating storing "evaluation information" in a database. The Examiner then refers to Figures 8 and 8A for the feature of "user-searching, using at least one natural-language word, to select at least one desired kind of stored experience", but this portion of the Hill reference merely shows a hypertext document featuring various hyperlinks grouped by topic (Fig. 8) and a search screen which allows the user to search Usenet groups for a particular search term (e.g., "Dylan") (Fig. 8A). It is respectfully submitted that <u>links to Usenet messages</u> are not <u>stored "experiences"</u>. That is, Hill does not store "experiences" but rather URL's which are <u>addresses</u> where a resource, such as a Web page, can be found. When a user queries Hill's database, a list of

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hyperlinks associated with each of the stored URL's is returned. This is in contrast with Appellant's invention which requires that user experiences be captured and stored in a database and wherein these user experiences can be retrieved and presented to a person searching for a particular experience.

It is respectfully submitted that Hill also fails to disclose one or more features of the dependent claims. For example, Claims 48 and 49 set forth the feature of searchably capturing for such database such knowledge of users concerning useful knowledge sources outside such group of users. In contrast, Hill only looks at a single source of information. As another example, Claim 56 recites the features of a) rating the relative overall value of each such at least one item of such experience according to the opinion of each of such involved subset of such population of users; b) collecting comments about each at least one item of such experience according to the opinion of each of such involved subset of such population of users; and c) associating, in such database, respective such ratings of relative overall value and respective such collected comments with respective such at least one item of such experience . It is respectfully submitted that Hill fails to disclose or even suggest these features.

For a rejection under 35 USC §102(e) to stand, each element of the rejected claim must be found in a single reference.

As Hill fails to disclose the claimed storage and retrieval of user experiences, the rejection cannot be sustained.

Reversal of the rejection of Claims 43-45, 48, 49, 52, 56, and 57 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) is respectfully sought

* * *

ISSUE 4: Under 35 USC §103(a), are Claims 46, 47, 50, 51, 53-55, 58, and 59

unpatentable over Hill in view of Ng?

Ng discloses a web site on the world-wide-web that allows users to search a product/price database. The database contains product and price information for a wide variety of products from many different suppliers such as online and offline stores. Information in the database is collected and corrected by submitting users who are rewarded for product submissions. The user highlights coordinates of the model, make, and price on the supplier's web page, so that automated software can later check the supplier's web page for price and product updates. The submitting user is rewarded for submitting product and price information. When other consumer-users search the database and find the product, the submitting user is again rewarded.

It is respectfully submitted that Ng fails to overcome the deficiencies of Hill's "System and Method for Locating Resources on a Network Using Resource Evaluations Derived From Electronic Messages". Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Hill in view of Ng fails to render obvious the subject matter of Claims 46, 47, 50, 51, 53-55, 58, and 59.

Reversal of the rejection of Claims 46, 47, 50, 51, 53-55, 58, and 59 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully sought.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

ISSUE 5: Under 35 USC §103(a), are Claims 60-62 unpatentable over Hill in view of Yong?

Yong discloses an end user query technology which is capable of automatically understanding the database model and guiding the user to scout for the desired information, thereby increasing productivity and ease of information access.

It is respectfully submitted that Yong fails to overcome the deficiencies of Hill's "System and Method for Locating Resources on a Network Using Resource Evaluations Derived From

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Electronic Messages". Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Hill in view of Yong fails to render obvious the subject matter of Claims 60-62.

Reversal of the rejection of Claims 60-62 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully sought.

* * *

ISSUE 6: Under 35 USC §103(a), is Claim 63 unpatentable over Hill in view of Nielson?

Nielsen discloses a method and system for facilitating the exchange of information between human users in a networked computer system.

It is respectfully submitted that Nielsen fails to overcome the deficiencies of Hill's "System and Method for Locating Resources on a Network Using Resource Evaluations Derived From Electronic Messages". Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Hill in view of Nielsen fails to render obvious the subject matter of Claim 63.

Reversal of the rejection of Claim 63 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully sought.

* * *

ISSUE 7: Are Claims 64-85 unpatentable "for the same reasons as discussed above"?

The Examiner states that Claims 64-85 "have the same subject matter as of claims above and essentially [are] rejected for the same reasons as discussed above." However, it is to be noted that the Examiner has failed to abide by the requirements of MPEP §2181 with respect to these claims which are written in means-plus-function format. MPEP §2181 notes that under 35 USC §112, Sixth Paragraph, "an element in a claim for a combination may be expressed as a means or step for performing a specified function without the recital of structure, material, or acts in support thereof, and such claim shall be construed to cover the corresponding structure, material, or acts described in the specification and equivalents thereof." MPEP §2181 requires that the Examiner interpret a "means or step plus function" limitation in a claim as limited to the

corresponding structure, materials or acts described in the specification.

It is respectfully submitted that Claims 64-85 have not been properly examined, and the rejection of these claims must be withdrawn.

Reversal of the rejection of Claims 64-85 is respectfully sought.

IX. <u>CONCLUSION</u>

The Appellants have demonstrated that the present invention as claimed is clearly presented in proper form and distinguishable over the prior art of record. Therefore, the Applicants respectfully request the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences to reverse the rejection of the Examiner and instruct the Examiner to issue a notice of allowance of all claims.

A fee of $255.00 will be paid from our Deposit Account No. 50-1887 to cover the filing fee for the brief. If there are any further fees necessitated by the foregoing communication not covered by the enclosed check, please charge such fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-1887, or if the amount submitted herewith is greater than the amount required, please credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account No. 50-1887.

<table>
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X. CLAIMS APPENDIX

1-34) (withdrawn)

35) An Internet website client-server computer system, for use to determine by e-mail survey a level of subject approval for each one of a population of survey participants by capturing each such participant's opinions about the degree of relevance of each of a respective set of natural language terms to each of a respective set of subjects, comprising:

   a) a client interface system arranged so that a survey taker may indicate at least

      i) a defined question for the survey,

      ii) a such set of subjects to be evaluated,

      iii) a such set of natural-language terms to be rated as to relevancy to each subject,

      iv) a participant audience, and

      v) a time-frame for response;

   b) a server computer processor system connected with said client interface system; and

   c) a server computer software system, operational with said server computer processor system, arranged to provide survey processing comprising

      i) compiling a survey file and survey document in accordance with survey taker input,

      ii) communicating such survey document to such participant audience, and

      iii) receiving and tabulating responses.

36) The system according to Claim 35 further comprising displaying survey results at a publicized URL.

37-42 (withdrawn)

43) An Internet client-server system for assisting at least one group of users having at least one common goal to capture and search, in a single database, offered knowledge, relevant to such at least one common goal, of a plurality of such users for the benefit of at least one of such users, comprising:

    a)   individually capturing for such database at least one experience of at least some of such plurality;

    b)   storing in such database such experience;

    c)   user-searching, using at least one natural-language word, to select at least one desired kind of stored experience;

    d)   performing such user-searching; and

    e)   presenting search results.

44) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 43 further comprising searchably capturing for such database at least one item of such knowledge selected from the group consisting essentially of

    a)   user-advice

    b)   opinions of experts

    c)   people who can help

    d)   miscellaneous such knowledge of users.

45) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 43 further comprising a substantially automatic website management system.

46) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 45 further comprising automatically rewarding assisting users for website management assistance.

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47) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 45 further comprising:

a) providing a software management system to directly manage such database and such population of users essentially without outside management; and

b) providing for variables in such software management system to be configurable without affecting such direct management operations;

c) wherein such software management system comprises

i) measuring management efforts of each of at least one management sub-community,

ii) setting goals for each of such management community, and

iii) managing a reward system to reward management efforts of each of such management sub-community.

48) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 43 further comprising searchably capturing for such database such knowledge of users concerning useful knowledge sources outside such group of users.

49) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 44 further comprising searchably capturing for such database such knowledge of users concerning useful knowledge sources outside such group of users.

50) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 44 further comprising:

a) providing at least one capability for at least one user to complete on-line at least one multiple choice poll; and

b) providing at least one reward for such at least one user to completing such at least one multiple choice poll.

51) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 45 wherein:

a) such common goal is sales-oriented,;

b) such group of users comprises sales personnel; and

c) those receiving such benefit comprise sales personnel.

52) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 43 wherein such step of user-searching, using at least one natural-language word, to select at least one desired kind of stored knowledge, further comprises:

a) selecting, if any, such at least one kind of stored experience associated with chosen such at least one natural language word;

b) selecting, if any, such at least one kind of stored experience in which the text of such at least one stored experience contains the chosen such at least one natural-language word;

c) selecting, if any, such at least one kind of stored experience in which the category of such at least one stored experience contains the chosen such at least one natural-language word; and

d) selecting, if any, such at least one kind of stored experience in which the title of such at least one stored experience contains the chosen such at least one natural-language word.

53) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 43, further comprising automatically managing a reward system to reward efforts of such at least one user.

54) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 53, further comprising:

a) automatically measuring and storing each experience contribution, including users' comments made by each such at least one user;

b) assigning points to be accumulated for each such experience contribution;

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c) automatically accumulating assigned points for each such experience contribution by each such at least one user;

d) automatically reporting such points accumulated for each such experience contribution;

e) defining at least one criteria for awarding prizes based on such accumulated points; and

f) automatically awarding prizes to such at least one user with accumulated points meeting such at least one criteria.

55) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 45 further comprising

a) managing such database and such group of users essentially without customer website management;

b) permitting at least one customer to configure a plurality of variables in such computer software for such managing of such database;

c) automatically setting goals for each such user participating in at least one management community; and

d) automatically managing a reward system to reward management efforts of each of such at least one user of such at least one management community.

56) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 43 further comprising:

a) rating the relative overall value of each such at least one item of such experience according to the opinion of each of such involved subset of such population of users;

b) collecting comments about each at least one item of such experience according to the opinion of each of such involved subset of such population of users; and

c) associating, in such database, respective such ratings of relative overall value and respective such collected comments with respective such at least one item of such experience.

57) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 43 further comprising automatically accumulating system operation data.

58) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 57 wherein such system operation data comprises:

a) data about compliance with such set of performance goals for each of at least one involved subset of such population of users;

b) data about each type of such stored experience;

c) data about such reward system; and

d) data about interviews of each of such involved subset of such population of users.

59) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 58 further comprising permitting such at least one user to view successively more detailed levels of such automatically accumulated system operation data.

60) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 43 further comprising:

a) requesting installation of at least one independent database access module onto the personal computer of such at least one user;

b) permitting selection, using such independent database access module, of at least one category of such knowledge for display by such at least one user;

c) automatically searching, using such at least one independent database access module, such database, without need of a browser, for at least one selected category of such knowledge from such database; and

d) displaying, using such at least one independent database access module, found knowledge from such at least one pre-determined category of such knowledge from such database to such at least one user.

61) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 60 further comprising:

a) displaying continuously at least one selected type of such pre-determined information from at least one pre-determined category of such knowledge from such knowledge stored in such database to such at least one user; and

b) scrolling a display of at least one selected type of such pre-determined information from at least one pre-determined category of such knowledge from such knowledge stored in such database to such at least one user .

62) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 61 further comprising:

a) making specific requests for information from information stored in such database by such at least one user.

63) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 43 further comprising:

a) receiving at least one request for information from such at least one user;

b) storing such at least one request for information;

c) notifying designated other such at least one user with particular expertise about such at least one request for information;

d) storing such at least one request for information and at least one response by such at least one user with particular expertise as such at least one experience; and

e) notifying such at least one user, requesting information, of such at least one experience containing such at least one request and such at least one response.

64) An Internet client-server system for assisting a group of users with at least one common goal to capture and search, in a single database, offered knowledge, relevant to such at least one common goal, of a plurality of such users for the benefit of at least one of such users, comprising:

   a)   interface means for individually capturing for such database at least one experience of at least some of such plurality;

   b)   database means for storing such experiences;

   c)   interface means for user-searching, using at least one natural-language word, to select at least one desired kind of stored experience;

   d)   processor means for performing such user-searching; and

   e)   interface means for presenting search results.

65) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 64 further comprising computer means for searchably capturing for such database at least one item of such knowledge selected from the group consisting essentially of:

   a)   user-advice

   b)   opinions of experts

   c)   people who can help

   d)   miscellaneous such knowledge of users.

66) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 65 further comprising computer means for substantially-automatic website managing.

67) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 65 further comprising computer means for automatically rewarding assisting users for website management assistance.

68) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 65 further comprising computer means for searchably capturing for such database such knowledge of users concerning useful sources outside such group of users.

69) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 65 further comprising computer means for providing at least one capability for at least one user to automatically take a desired survey among a selected subgroup of such users.

70) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 66 wherein such interface means for user-searching, using at least one natural-language word, to select at least one desired kind of stored experience, further comprises

   a) computer means for selecting, if any, such at least one kind of stored experience associated with chosen such at least one natural language word;

   b) computer means for selecting, if any, such at least one kind of stored experience in which the text of such at least one stored experience contains the chosen such at least one natural-language word;

   c) computer means for selecting, if any, such at least one kind of stored experience in which the category of such at least one stored experience contains the chosen such at least one natural-language word; and

   d) computer means for selecting, if any, such at least one kind of stored experience in which the title of such at least one stored experience contains the chosen such at least one natural-language word.

71) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 66 further comprising computer means for automatically managing a reward system to reward efforts of such at least one user.

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72) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 71 further comprising:

    a)   computer means for automatically measuring and storing each experience contribution, including users' comments made by each such at least one user;

    b)   computer means for assigning points to be accumulated for each such experience contribution;

    c)   computer means for automatically accumulating assigned points for each such experience contribution by each such at least one user;

    d)   computer means for automatically reporting such points accumulated for each such experience contribution;

    e)   computer means for defining at least one criteria for awarding prizes based on such accumulated points; and

    f)   computer means for automatically awarding prizes to such at least one user with accumulated points meeting such at least one criteria.

73) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 65 further comprising

    a)   computer means for managing of such database and such group of users essentially without customer website management;

    b)   computer means for permitting at least one customer to configure a plurality of variables in such computer software for such managing of such database;

    c)   computer means for automatically setting goals for each such user participating in at least one management community; and

    d)   computer means for automatically managing a reward system to reward management efforts of each of such at least one user of such at least one management community.

74) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 66 further comprising:

    a)   computer means for rating the relative overall value of each such at least one item of such experience according to the opinion of each of such involved subset of such population of users;

    b)   computer means for collecting comments about each at least one item of such experience according to the opinion of each of such involved subset of such population of users; and

    c)   computer means for associating, in such database, respective such ratings of relative overall value and respective such collected comments with respective such at least one item of such experience.

75) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 66 further comprising computer means for automatically accumulating system operation data.

76) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 75 wherein such system operation data comprises:

    a)   data about compliance with such set of performance goals for each of at least one involved subset of such population of users;

    b)   data about each type of such stored experience;

    c)   data about such reward system; and

    d)   data about interviews of each of such involved subset of such population of users.

77) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 76 further comprising computer means for permitting such at least one user to view successively more detailed levels of such automatically accumulated system operation data.

78) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 64 further comprising:

   a)   computer means for requesting installation of at least one independent database access module onto the personal computer of such at least one user;

   b)   computer means for permitting selection, using such independent database access module, of at least one category of such knowledge for display by such at least one user;

   c)   computer means for automatically searching, using such at least one independent database access module, such database, without need of a browser, for at least one selected category of such knowledge from such database; and

   d)   computer means for displaying, using such at least one independent database access module, found knowledge from such at least one pre-determined category of such knowledge from such database to such at least one user.

79) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 78 further comprising:

   a)   computer means for displaying continuously at least one selected type of such pre-determined information from at least one pre-determined category of such knowledge from such knowledge stored in such database to such at least one user ; and

   b)   computer means for scrolling a display of at least one selected type of such pre-determined information from at least one pre-determined category of such knowledge from such knowledge stored in such database to such at least one user

80) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 79 further comprising:

   a)   computer means for making specific requests for information from information stored in such database by such at least one user.

81) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 66 further comprising:

    a)   computer means for receiving at least one request for information from such at least one user;

    b)   computer means for storing such at least one request for information;

    c)   computer means for notifying designated other such at least one user with particular expertise about such at least one request for information;

    d)   computer means for storing such at least one request for information and at least one response by such at least one user with particular expertise as such at least one experience; and

    e)   computer means for notifying such at least one user, requesting information, of such at least one experience containing such at least one request and such at least one response.

82) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 66 wherein:

    a)   such common goal is sales-oriented,;

    b)   such group of users comprises sales personnel; and

    c)   those receiving such benefit comprise sales personnel.

83) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 70 wherein:

    a)   such common goal is sales-oriented,;

    b)   such group of users comprises sales personnel; and

    c)   those receiving such benefit comprise sales personnel.

84) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 74 wherein:

    a)   such common goal is sales-oriented,;

    b)   such group of users comprises sales personnel; and

c) those receiving such benefit comprise sales personnel.

85) The Internet client-server system according to Claim 78 wherein:

a) such common goal is sales-oriented,;

b) such group of users comprises sales personnel; and

c) those receiving such benefit comprise sales personnel.

XI.   <u>EVIDENCE APPENDIX</u>

None.

XII. RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

None.